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Working Group on Contemporary Forms
of Slavery
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Items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

MEASURES TO PREVENT AND REPRESS ALL CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY, INCLUDING THE CONSIDERATION OF CORRUPTION AND INTERNATIONAL DEBT AS PROMOTING FACTORS OF CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY AND OTHER FORMS OF EXPLOITATION

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. By their resolutions 1999/46 and 1999/17, the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, respectively requested the Secretary-General to submit information on various issues relating to slavery.

2. Pursuant to these resolutions, the Secretary-General, on 7 February 2000, addressed requests to Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for information.

3. As of 15 May 2000, replies had been received from the Governments of Belarus, Mauritius, Mexico, Qatar and Slovakia.

4. Replies were also received from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

5. Comments were received from the Council of Europe, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization of American States and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

6. Information was also received from Anti-Slavery International.

7. The present report contains a summary of the substantive replies received.

I. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

Belarus

[Original: Russian]
[19 April 2000]

In the Republic of Belarus the basic standards which establish and protect the legitimate rights and interests of children are defined in the Marriage and Family Code and the Rights of the Child Act.

Under articles 162-1, 163 and 164 of the Code of Administrative Offences, proceedings may be brought for engaging in prostitution, soliciting foreign nationals and distributing cassettes and disks containing unlawful video- and sound-recordings.

In the Criminal Code these issues are dealt with in chapter 8, article 115, paragraph 4, and articles 117-119, 123 and 124 (rape, sexual intercourse with a minor under the age of 16, depravity, sodomy, abduction or substitution of an infant, unlawful deprivation of liberty), and chapter 15, articles 205, 221, 223 and 223-1 (enticement of minors into criminal activity, brothel-keeping and procurement, manufacture or retail of pornographic items, manufacture or distribution of works that promote the cult of violence and cruelty).

The same issues are addressed by the Criminal Code of 9 July 1999, which is due to come into force in the second half of 2000, under chapter 17, article 128 (offences against the security of humanity), chapter 20, article 166, paragraph 3, article 167, paragraph 2, articles 168 and 169, article 170, paragraph 2, and article 171 (rape, sexual violence, sexual intercourse and other sexual relations with a minor under the age of 16, depravity, coercion to engage in sex acts, brothel-keeping, procurement and pimping), chapter 21, articles 172 and 173 (enticement of a minor into criminal activity, enticement of a minor into antisocial behaviour), and chapter 22, articles 181-183 and 187 (trafficking in human beings, abduction, unlawful deprivation of liberty, recruitment with a view to exploitation).

Mauritius

[Original: English]
[6 April 2000]

Actions

1. Mauritius has a National Action Plan to Combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.* The Plan was prepared on the basis of:

(a) The recommendations of the World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in August 1996;

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* Available from the secretariat.

(b) The recommendations of a national seminar held in June 1996 with the participation of NGOs and the ministries and departments concerned. NGOs dealing with children participated in formulating recommendations which have been incorporated in the Action Plan;

(c) A Study on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children which was conducted with the assistance of UNICEF and WHO at the request of the Government. The study aimed at assessing the situation of child prostitution, the causes and the factors leading to child prostitution. It made recommendations, for action, based on its findings. The study involved consultations and interviews with victims and intermediaries. The findings of the study have provided valuable inputs for the preparation of the Action Plan.

2. The National Action Plan is being implemented with the participation of the following elements:

(a) A Steering Committee comprising representatives of the police, probation authorities, the Ministries of Social Security, Health and Education, NGOs and others has been constituted to ensure that there is a coordinated approach and that action is taken by each organization;

(b) A collaborative action with NGOs and community-based associations has been initiated. Meetings with the NGOs are held regularly and the main areas of action which have been identified are education and information, legal reforms, and intervention and support;

(c) A hotline has been set up and is managed by the National Children's Council (NCC), a statutory body grouping NGOs and relevant ministries. The NCC receives calls on the hotline and refers them to the police for action;

(d) An education and information campaign on unsafe sex was started in January 1999 and is being carried out by the NCC in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning Association. The campaign is directed at young people, mainly students;

(e) A national rally was held in September 1998 in one of the areas which is considered to be vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation of children. NGOs and community-based associations participated fully in the rally;

(f) Door-to-door counselling was organized in one vulnerable region with the participation of 70 volunteers and NGOs;

(g) A Child Watch Network has been set up on a pilot basis for surveillance and early detection of children who are at risk. The Network is composed of Ministry staff, members of women's associations and community-based associations, social workers, teachers, counsellors, etc. The scheme aims to provide timely support to children and prevent their exploitation;

(h) Children's clubs have been set up, with priority in deprived areas, to provide children with opportunities for healthy and meaningful activities and protect them from exploitation and abuse;

(i) A scheme to provide training to school leavers who have no other possibilities of being admitted to a formal educational institution has been launched. The scheme offers training, education and creative and recreational activities and is flexible and non-formal. It aims at equipping the children with skills and enabling them to earn their living.

(j) Legal reforms have been brought about with the introduction of the Child Protection (Miscellaneous) Act, the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act and the Criminal Code Supplementary (Amendment) Act; 25 Acts were amended to ensure harmonization with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The main amendments are:

(i) The law now punishes sexual abuse against boys (the previous law provided for sexual abuse against girls only);

(ii) The Dangerous Drugs Act has been amended to provide for fines and imprisonment of those who supply drugs to minors and mentally handicapped persons;

(iii) It provides for penalties for the offences of sexual abuse, sodomy, bestiality, debauchery, detention, sequestration or abandonment of a child, harbouring a minor without permission, dealing with obscene matter and keeping brothels;

(iv) A person who has sexual intercourse with a minor below 16 or a mentally handicapped person, even with the latter's consent, will be committing an offence and be liable to 10 years' imprisonment;

(k) Sexual harassment has been highlighted as the study conducted in 1998 indicated that many children are not aware of their rights, and are not informed about this matter.

3. Areas of priority are prevention, education and information. These areas have been selected as the study conducted in 1998 indicated that many children are not aware of their rights, and are not informed about sexual and reproductive rights and the health implications of unsafe sex. Further, existing legal provisions are not comprehensive enough to enable effective intervention in cases of child prostitution.

4. The prevention campaign includes the following:

(a) A national campaign on unsafe sex has been carried out in schools since January 1999;

(b) A painting competition on child abuse was held last year;

(c) Stickers, posters and pamphlets are being distributed;

(d) A booklet on the Convention on the Rights of the Child is being distributed;

(e) A booklet on the rights and responsibilities of children has been distributed;

(f) Education and sensitization campaigns on the Convention on the Rights of the Child are being conducted.

5 Problems/obstacles to progress are:

(a) Sensational treatment of the issue by the media, thus diverting attention from the main issues;

(b) Lack of prompt intervention by the police, which is empowered by the existing law to act in cases of alleged child prostitution;

(c) Legal provisions are inadequate and need to be strengthened;

(d) Skills and expertise to conduct training programmes are inadequate;

(e) Appropriate training (including audio-visual) material is unavailable;

(f) There are no structures to support and rehabilitate victims;

(g) There are no mechanisms to reintegrate victims into the education system;

(h) There are no institutions that receive and support pregnant adolescents;

(i) It is difficult to reach out to victims as they do not generally come forward to report cases;

(j) Police lack sensitivity towards child victims who have to testify;

(k) There are no appropriate health structures to deal specifically with sexual assault cases.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[14 April 2000]

The commercial sexual exploitation of children

1 On 12 December 1998 the Chamber of Deputies approved the initiative of reforming the Penal Code of the Federal District for Ordinary Matters and for the Entire Republic for Federal Matters, with a view to classifying child pornography as an offence and sanctioning child prostitution more severely. The decree whereby the Federal Penal Code and the Federal Code of Criminal Procedure were amended and provisions added concerning the corruption of minors and incompetent persons, child pornography and the sexual prostitution of minors was published on 4 January 2000 in the Diario Oficial of the Federation.

2 Some bodies have made progress in this respect, such as the reform promoted by the Assembly of Representatives of the Federal District, while in the State of Campeche, an initiative was prepared for amendments to the State Penal Code with a view to classifying child pornography as an offence

3 In 1998 the Government of Mexico established an Inter-Agency National Commission to draw up a Plan of Action to Prevent, Address and Eradicate the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, headed by the National System for the Integral Development of the Family (DIF) The Plan of Action is an inter-agency endeavour along with non-governmental organizations to adopt efficient means of eradicating the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Mexico

4 The Commission's aim is to unite efforts, resources, capabilities and experience in the sectors taking part in order to develop the following aspects of its work 1 Gauging the magnitude of the problem, 2 Protection, 3 Recovery and reintegration, 4 Creation of awareness, 5 Training, 6 Prevention, and 7 Participation of children and young people With this as the basis, the intention is

(a) As regards gauging the magnitude of the problem, to concentrate on the classification and quantification of the problem and the exchange of information,

(b) As regards protection, to standardize the classification of the sexual commercial exploitation of children as a serious offence, to seek to increase penalties at the federal and state levels, to promote international cooperation in administrative and judicial matters, and to incorporate the offence in the Organized Crime Act,

(c) As regards recovery and reintegration, to create a specialized infrastructure for the rehabilitation of child victims and augment the number of care and reporting centres,

(d) As regards creation of awareness, to carry out publicity campaigns targeting society in general, tourists, public security personnel and public and private officials directly involved in dealing with these problems and information and communication campaigns with a thematic content,

(e) As regards training, to give courses on the subject to public and private officials, parents, children and young people,

(f) As regards prevention, to develop response models, to monitor and supervise meeting points, to apply the law to paedophiles and those who exploit children and to prepare educational materials for children,

(g) As regards the participation of children and young people, to provide training courses for parents, schoolteachers, children and young people, for public security bodies, magistrates and government officials, and for public officials in public and private aid institutions

5. The Office of the Procurator-General and DIF signed a collaboration agreement to promote the establishment of agencies specializing in children's affairs. Under this agreement training courses have been organized for personnel of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judicial police with a view to promoting awareness and efficiency in the work of public officials responsible for the administration and obtaining of justice, who are involved in dealing with child victims.

6. As a result of the inter-agency commitment, the number of specialized agencies in Mexico has been increased and there are now 20.

7. With a view to identifying the magnitude of the child prostitution phenomenon and under the auspices of the Inter-American Children's Institute, DIF backed the non-governmental organization Espacios para el Desarrollo Integral, A.C. (EDIAC) in carrying out a field survey of commercial sexual exploitation in Mexico, the results of which were announced in April 1999.

8. At the present time, the DIF is making a study of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the Republic of Mexico, in principle in the cities of Guadalajara, Acapulco, Cancún, Tapachula, Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, in order to ascertain how the gangs recruit and operate.

9. In accordance with the guidelines of the World Tourism Organization and the International Federation of Women in Travel Agencies, the Ministry of Tourism drew up a brochure to explain to foreign tourists that sexual tourism is prohibited in Mexico.

Children and young people at risk

10. Through its programme for children and young people at risk (PAMAR), DIF seeks to maintain the link between street children and their families, now that a wide-ranging study has produced evidence that some 98 per cent of such children do have a family relationship, although in many cases their family has various types of problems.

11. As regards children at risk, including the exploitation of child labour and sexual exploitation, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) is conducting training activities for persons promoting the protection of children's rights and the dissemination and promotion of their rights on the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as training for the personnel of government institutions, local human rights commissions and professionals in general engaged in activities concerning children and their rights.

12. CNDH has continued to distribute brochures and videos on the rights of the child, both to offset the phenomenon of risk and to contribute to the protection and respect of the rights of all Mexican children in a situation of vulnerability or risk, thus helping to overcome various forms of discrimination and violence which may concern them and to modify cultural patterns which constitute a violation of the rights of the child and above all create a human rights culture in which their integrity and dignity as individuals are respected.

Adoption

13. In May 1998, reforms on adoption were incorporated into Mexico's legislation in order to establish the legal institutions of full adoption and international adoption. A supplement was added to the Civil Code on Ordinary Matters for the Federal District and on Federal Matters for the Entire Republic, a further 17 states of the Republic of Mexico have introduced reforms into their civil codes and codes of civil procedure with the aim of incorporating these institutions.

14. International adoption is a means of collaborating to combat traffic in children and also of implementing the constitutional mandate arising from Mexico's signing of The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption.

15. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has concluded coordination agreements with the state governments on adoptions, maintenance and the return of children through the Interior Ministry of each state, the state DIFs and the state procurator-general's offices.

Transnational organized crime

16. The aim of the international community is to have a general legal framework available to reinforce national legislation as regards, inter alia, traffic in persons, especially women and children. Mexico has given high priority here to the protection of the victim and his rights vis-à-vis organized transnational crime, by taking an active share in drawing up a draft protocol to prevent and combat international trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

17. With this in mind, Ms. Rosario Green, along with the women ministers of foreign affairs of nine countries, sent a note to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in which the ministers reassert the support of their governments for combating trafficking in human beings, predominantly women and children and set out the commitment of their governments to eradicating the sale and purchase of human beings everywhere in the world, to prevent them from being placed in situations of sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and debt bondage which are nothing short of slavery. Lastly, they call jointly for the finalization and immediate implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, and reiterate their commitment and that of their Governments to doing everything in their power to achieve that aim.

Migrant workers

18. On 9 March 1999, the Government of Mexico ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted in New York on 18 December 1990.

19. Measures have also been taken to guarantee the protection of migrants in transit through Mexico, irrespective of their nationality or of their migrant status.

20. Mention may be made of the establishment of the Beta Groups, to protect the persons and property of migrants, irrespective of their nationality and their migrant status, by action to restrain and prevent the aggression and abuse to which they are subjected by criminals or improper acts of the authorities.

21. Such groups have proved to be effective in crime prevention in areas of intensive migrant transit, and in the protection of their human rights and property. The groups have been thanked by the communities in which they operate, the local authorities and the migrants themselves.

22. Mexico's Consulates in the United States have moreover increased their efforts in respect of protection, by concentrating on a better distribution of resources, the training of consular officials and the constant improvement of consular procedures and services both to Mexicans and foreigners.

Repatriated children

23. In the framework of the National Programme of Action for Children, under the section on children in especially difficult circumstances, attention is given to repatriated children; the safe and orderly repatriation of the young trans-border migrant is ensured and his rights, his physical and emotional integrity and his reintegration into his family and community guaranteed.

24. Local commissions have been set up in eight major frontier cities: Tijuana (B.C.), Ciudad Acuña and Piedras Negras (Coahuila), Ciudad Juárez (Chihuahua), Agua Prieta and Nogales (Sonora), Reynosa and Matamoros (Tamaulipas).

25. A network of 18 hostels has been formed to care for the children, 11 of which belong to the municipal DIFs and 7 to civil-society organizations.

26. In 1998, these hostels cared for 8,560 repatriated children.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[7 March 2000]

1. No disputes pertaining to discrimination and minorities have come to the attention of the competent authorities in the State of Qatar. There have also been no reports of trafficking in persons, of exploitation of the prostitution of others, or of offences relating to the sale of children, child prostitution or the use of children in the production of pornographic material.

2. The various contemporary forms of slavery mentioned in the report are virtually non-existent in the State of Qatar. Furthermore, the amended provisional Constitution promulgated in 1972 and the legislation in force in the State are designed to protect the individual and society from exploitation and inhumane practices. The Penal Code and the Shari'a prohibit all forms of slavery as well as trafficking in women, prostitution and the like, since this legislation is based on the official State religion, Islam, which prohibits exploitation of

the individual, prostitution, trafficking in women and other forms of immorality as well as activities that infringe the norms of decency and justice. Article 7 of the amended provisional Constitution of the State, promulgated on 19 April 1972, lays down the following social principles:

(a) The State shall strive to consolidate sound Islamic religious principles in society and to purge it of all forms of moral turpitude;

(b) The State shall look after young people, preserving them from influences conducive to corruption, protecting them from exploitation and safeguarding them from the evils of physical and spiritual neglect;

(c) Article 204 of Section 22 (Sexual and moral offences) of Act No. 14 of 1971 promulgating the Penal Code of Qatar addresses the matter as follows: "Anyone who establishes, operates or assists in the establishment or operation of a house of prostitution, or, in his capacity as the owner or the agent of the owner of a house, leases the said house in the knowledge that it will be used as a house of prostitution, or if he has reason to believe that it will be used as such, or if he subsequently comes to know that it is being used in that manner and fails to notify the competent authority, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of up to two years and/or a fine not exceeding 2,000 riyals".

The State is constantly amending the existing legislation to provide for the prosecution of offenders who undermine the fabric of society. Its competent agencies also monitor the application and implementation of this legislation.

3. From the foregoing it is evident that the amended provisional Constitution promulgated in 1972 and the legislation in force in a variety of fields, i.e. the legislation emanating from the State religion and the Islamic Shari'a, ensure that society is well protected from the dangers posed by the contemporary forms of slavery mentioned in the report, such as prostitution, trafficking in women and other phenomena.

4. With regard to misuse of the Internet for purposes of sexual exploitation and the need to implement existing legislation or enact new laws to prevent such misuse, the points made in the report in that regard are extremely pertinent at the present time. In our view, although the Internet plays a highly beneficial role in the modern world, some provision must be made by the international community and international organizations for monitoring and control to ensure that it is not misused. It should be noted that the State of Qatar has not yet experienced such undesirable phenomena.

Slovakia

[Original: English]
[15 April 2000]

1. The Slovak Republic has taken internal measures to protect persons, particularly children and women, and to prevent trafficking of these persons and their abuse for the purposes of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation.

Constitutional and legislative framework

2. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic, as the State's fundamental law, defines the rights to inviolability of the person and his/her privacy; preservation of human dignity, personal honour and one's good name, protection from forced labour, protection against unwarranted interference into one's private and family life. Intervention into the above constitutionally guaranteed rights is punished under the following provisions of the Slovak Republic's Criminal Code:

(a) Generally dangerous criminal acts:

- Section 204 compelling prostitution. Under the Criminal Code of the Slovak Republic, this is understood to be an act through which the offender inveigles, causes or entices another to commit prostitution, or through which he profits from prostitution committed by another. Circumstances causing an increase in the basic level of punishment are the use of violence, threat of violence or other serious injury, or the abuse of someone's helplessness or addiction. Equally, if, through this act, the offender makes a substantial profit, or if he commits such an offence as a member of an organized group, or against a person younger than 18, or commits such an offence abroad, these circumstances increase the punishment. A circumstance that particularly increases the punishment is the commitment of such an offence against a person younger than 15 or in affiliation with an international organized group;

- Section 205 and section 205a endangering morality. This criminal act is related to offering, ceding, or making available pornographic materials at places accessible to persons younger than 18. The criminal act specified under section 205a is related to the production or release into circulation of pornographic materials displaying disrespect for mankind or violence, or depicting sexually depraved practices;

- Section 205b production of child pornography. A person commits this criminal act if he exploits a child for the production of child pornography, or enables the exploitation thereof or otherwise participates in the production thereof. A circumstance especially increasing the punishment is the commitment of such act on a child younger than 12;

- Section 205c distribution of child pornography. Under these provisions, offenders who distribute child pornography are punished. Reasons for the application of a stricter punishment may include the commitment of such an act through print, film, radio, television, through the use of a computer network or other similarly effective means, or against a person younger than 18;

- Sections 208a and 209b unwarranted removal of organs and tissues. Under these provisions, the unwarranted removal of organs and tissue from a living or deceased person is punished. A stricter punishment may be applied if such an act results in serious injury to health or death. Persons obtaining organs or tissue for themselves or another person are punished equally,

(b) Criminal acts against human dignity:

- Section 241 rape. Under these provisions, an action within which the offender, using violence or the threat of imminent violence, forces a woman to have sexual intercourse, or abuses her inability to defend herself to commit such an act, is punished. Increased punishment is applied if such an act is committed against a person younger than 15 or if such an action results in death;

- Section 242 sexual abuse. This provision is aimed at protecting the undisturbed moral and physical development of minors (i.e. persons under 15) and at the same time provides protection to any other person put into another's care against the abuse of his dependency;

- Section 246 traffic of women. This offence was incorporated into Slovak criminal law in line with international commitments assumed. It is based on protection against the enticing, hiring or transporting of a woman abroad with the intention of using her for the performance of sexual intercourse with other persons. The level of punishment can be increased if the offender commits such an act as a member of an organized group, against a person younger than 18, or if he commits such an act with the intention of using the woman for prostitution;

- Section 216a trade in children. Under these provisions, offenders who for a reward entrust a child to another's care for the purpose of adoption, child labour or other purpose are punished. The criminal law provisions on this offence are based on provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

- Section 217a illegal employment of children. In the case of this offence, the subject of punishment is the illegal employment of a child younger than 15 who is thereby prevented from obligatory school attendance,

(c) Criminal acts related to contemporary forms of slavery:

- Section 215 tyranny of a relative or dependant;

- Section 216 abduction;

- Section 217 endangering the moral development of youth;

- Section 219 murder. This offence was extended to include the qualification "of pregnant women" under which the murder of a pregnant woman constitutes a reason for the application of a stricter level of punishment.

3. The Slovak Republic is also committed by a number of international treaties related to the prevention of contemporary forms of slavery, e.g. the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, International Convention for the

Suppression, of the Traffic in Women of Full Age, International Agreement for the Suppression of Obscene Publication, International Convention for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications, Slavery Convention, etc.

Studies regarding the abuse and neglect of children in the family and subsequent prostitution

4. For the school year 1999/2000, the Police Force Presidium, in cooperation with the education sector, prepared a project in selected districts under the title "Behave Normally", which comprises 10 modules, including one entitled "Violence".

5. The Biological and Social Communication Research Department at the Academy of Sciences, which publishes the results of its research, has long been concerned with sexual behavioural problems.

Bodies and organizations concerned with the problems of violence and neglect in the family

6. Pursuant to Social Assistance Act No. 195/1998 Coll., the issue of violence and child neglect in the family falls under the competence of district and regional administration, as State social aid bodies, and municipalities. Cases of violence and child neglect in the family are usually brought to the attention of district administration and municipalities on the basis of notification by other entities (schools, healthcare establishments, citizens, the police, etc.), as well as by the investigative activities of individual district offices and municipalities.

7. A number of governmental and non-governmental organizations (the Children's Fund, Slovak Committee for UNICEF, Centre for the International Legal Protection of Children and Youth, Open Society Foundation, etc.) are concerned with this issue in Slovakia.

8. Upon the initiative of Criminal Police Office employees, Governmental Resolution No. 216/1997 of 25 March 1997 on a Proposal of Measures in the Area of the Fight against Child Pornography and the Sexual Abuse of Women and Children was elaborated and adopted by the Government. At the same time, tasks for all the ministries which are to a certain extent involved in the issue were adopted through the Resolution. The Police Force is the main body concerned with the fight against these negative phenomena. In 1997 Police Force Presidium Order No. 28/1997 was issued, which laid down the system for the Police Force's work in the area of crime committed by and against minors. On the basis of this Order, criminal police employees were appointed to address the given issue. A proposal for the establishment of specialized offices for the area of crime committed by and against minors is currently being elaborated. In view of the fact that the tasks arising from the Measures against Child Pornography and the Sexual Abuse of Women and Children have been fulfilled, the sectors concerned presented a proposal for their abolishment by mutual agreement in 1999. The Comprehensive Programme for the Fight against Crime, consisting of concrete tasks which, inter alia, place particular emphasis on child pornography and traffic in women and children, was subsequently adopted through Governmental Resolution No. 438/99 of 9 June 1999.

9. In the Police Force, the issue of child neglect and violence against children in families is addressed by the Department of Violent Crime at the Criminal Police Office (monitoring of the

situation, investigation of crimes) and the investigation section of the Police Force, where Police Force investigators from investigation offices are obliged to file reports (from schools, healthcare establishments, citizens, the police, etc.) of evidence indicating that a criminal act has been committed and process these reports as quickly as possible pursuant to section 158 of the Criminal Code. Investigators specializing in the investigation of crimes committed by and against minors have also been appointed at investigation offices of the Police Force.

10. Linka detskej istoty (LDI - children's safety line) assisted in the collection of statistical data on the abuse of children. Information gained in this way serves, inter alia, as a basis for resolving situations where a child's life or health is seriously endangered in its present environment until the court reaches a decision. The placement of a child in substitute care is, however, seen as a last resort. Educational activities, including the improvement of a couple's relationship, are more appropriate means when the child's upbringing is seriously endangered or disturbed. Certain educational measures (caution, supervision, restraint) may be applied in cases where parents or other persons endanger or disturb children's normal development or seriously violate their obligations, above all by failing to create appropriate conditions for a child's development.

11. LDI is a national project of the Slovak Committee for UNICEF which was set up on 26 January 1999. It is the first specialized telephone helpline for children and young people in Slovakia. It operates on a 24-hour basis, including weekends and holidays, and is free and anonymous. The main purpose of establishing the helpline was to offer children needing to communicate immediate telephone contact with qualified experts.

12. On the basis of practical experience, a social and legal advisory centre was established at LDI, to which both children and adults (parents, relatives or other persons affected by a problem) can regularly turn. The advisory centre is open twice a week. Its employees offer clients relevant information in the area of children's rights, family, labour and criminal law, and the social security law. Direct contact with an adviser can be arranged by telephone.

13. Since 1 March 1999 - as yet only in the Bratislava region - LDI has offered further services by establishing a crisis centre and offering immediate crisis intervention. This has provided the possibility of securing the necessary level of protection, safety and expert treatment for children at all times. Children can turn to the crisis centre by contacting LDI on its widely known number 0820 112 112.

14. LDI also directly participates in the solution of concrete cases which are reported by children themselves or other persons on their behalf. Callers are able to talk about bad experiences and receive continuous support and information on what they can do in their given situation, alone or with the help of someone close to them, and where they can turn to resolve the situation on a legal level. The child affected, or another person on its behalf, can also directly contact the crisis centre of the Slovak Committee for UNICEF. This organization works on both a preventive and an educational level, particularly by informing children of their rights, of what contravenes their rights, and how to avoid or stop undesired situations.

15. With the aim of presenting and exchanging expert know-how and practical experiences, LDI employees regularly participate at expert forums on a given issue, such as the "Child in Danger" conferences organized by the Children's Fund of the Slovak Republic, "Child Tyranny, Abuse and Neglect" seminars organized by the Open Society Foundation, etc.

National, regional and international initiatives adopted with the aim of reducing the occurrence of violence and neglect in the family

16. On 5 November 1996, the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted the "Proposal of Measures in the Area of the Fight against Child Pornography and the Sexual Abuse of Children" through Resolution No. 747/1996. Within the framework of the proposal, it is necessary to secure the following at primary schools:

(a) In cooperation with district offices' education and culture departments, the organization of methodical inputs, in the framework of parents' associations, in the form of expert-led lectures and debates on ways to increase the safety of children and young people and protect children from possible abuse;

(b) In the education process, in the framework of the implementation of sexual education, students should be warned in an appropriate way of the danger of sexual and other abuse and informed about effective methods of protection and safe behaviour;

(c) In the framework of physical education, lessons should make use of the opportunity provided by the subject "Sporting Techniques and Self-Defence" to learn and practise basic sequences of defence techniques, including defensive grasps, and simultaneously learn to provide mutual assistance;

(d) Member of the Police Force should be invited to debates with the aim of informing students and parents seen to be at high risk of becoming involved in sexual abuse about possibilities for effective protection and defence, taking into account the morality, ethics and suitability of such protection;

(e) In the form of lectures and discussions, students should be taught the negative impacts of bullying and physical and psychological tyranny, how they can defend themselves effectively against these negative phenomena; the cooperation of the educational psychology advisory centre should be sought;

(f) Appropriate methods of preventing the abuse of children and minors, taking into account the specific needs of primary school pupils, should be used.

17. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is preparing a number of conceptual and legislative measures in the period until 2001.

Activities aimed at the prevention of the abuse of women: National Action Plan for Women

18. The National Action Plan for Women was elaborated using the conclusions of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing as a basic programming document. The Plan

was elaborated by the Coordination Committee for Women's Issues and adopted by the Government in September 1997. One of the NAP's priorities is the issue of violence against women. A separate chapter (VI), under the title "Create Conditions for the Elimination of Violence against Women", is dedicated to this question. With the aim of solving the problems outlined, the following measures were adopted:

1. Create legislative and preventive measures for the elimination of violence against women.

2. Support the creation of establishments for women who have become victims of violence, or establishments for women and children in the period of separation, coping with difficult situations, and so on.

3. Secure by legislation that crimes against family members can be prosecuted by law without requiring the agreement of the victim of abuse or rape.

4. Elaborate programmes to change the behaviour of aggressors and where possible return those whose behaviour and relations with other family members substantially improve to the family.

5. Elaborate educational programmes focused on changing the behaviour of aggressors with the aim of securing their return to the family.

6. Create conditions for the establishment of an SOS line for victims of violence or secure retraining for employees of existing helplines in this area.

7. Join programmes whose goal is the elimination of prostitution and traffic in women.

19. With the aim of strengthening the position of women in society and securing the protection of their rights, an Equal Opportunities Department was set up at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The issue of the abuse of women, under which the issues of the sexual abuse of women, traffic in women and forced prostitution also fall, is one of the Department's concerns. The Expert Group for the Prevention of Violence Committed against Women and in Families of the Council of the Government for Crime Prevention, which is preparing a national strategy for the elimination of violence committed against women and in families, has a similar focus.

Conclusion

20. The issue of the prevention of the abuse of children and women and any other contemporary form of slavery receives close attention in the Slovak Republic, both in the area of the adoption of related legislation and the field of the adoption of concrete measures. The tasks arising for individual authorities and organizations in the area of the fight against these negative phenomena correspond to the commitments assumed by the Slovak Republic when joining the relevant international documents.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

[Original: English]
[15 April 2000]

1. The question of debt bondage in rural areas is of particular relevance for FAO, which believes that the inability to hold full land-tenure rights can be an indicator of some form of servile status, and therefore a contemporary form of slavery. Unfortunately, much of the available information is anecdotal, reflecting de facto local situations in many countries which persists despite attempts at eradication and prohibition through legislation.

2. FAO has a mandate to record malfunctioning land tenure systems, while ILO is its mandated partner in documenting the human condition resulting from such relationships. The FAO Land Tenure Service stands ready to continue work on this issue.

III. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development noted that slavery is not covered by its activities; it therefore, had no information to provide.

2. The International Monetary Fund has no information relevant to debt bondage.

3. The Organization of American States submitted a report on the situation of human rights in the Dominican Republic. The report is available with the secretariat for consultation.

Council of Europe

[Original: English]
[27 April 2000]

The Council of Europe is very concerned about the issue of contemporary forms of slavery, particularly with regard to women migrants and the trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It has transmitted the following documents, which are available for consultation with the secretariat:

Good and bad practices regarding the image of women in the media, the case of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation;

Action against traffic in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation: the role of NGOs;

Prevention of the risks of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation: actions organized in Albania for Kosovar refugees;

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1325 (1997), on traffic in women and forced prostitution in Council of Europe member States.

IV. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Anti-Slavery International

1. Anti-Slavery International has submitted for the Working Group's attention a summary of a report concerning traffic in children between Benin and Gabon, as well as a document on debt bondage; these are available from the secretariat.

2. Anti-Slavery International is campaigning to draw attention to the continuing prevalence of bonded labour. As part of the campaign, the organization has been informing both decision makers and the general public about this serious human rights violation and encouraging them to show their support by signing postcards. These postcards urge the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to:

Draw attention to the plight of bonded labourers and made the eradication of bonded labour a priority;

Take measures to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to identify and deal with issues related to slavery, such as the creation of a United Nations Special Rapporteur on slavery;

Work with the ILO and other sectors of the United Nations to identify specific methods for eliminating bonded labour throughout the world.